

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2396

As Reported by House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to school safety and security personnel.

Brief Description: Convening a work group to evaluate issues relating to school security professionals.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 1/18/06, 2/1/06 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Directs the Washington School Safety Center Advisory Committee, working with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, to convene a workgroup to evaluate and make recommendations regarding experience, training and licensure requirements for school security personnel.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; P. Sullivan, Vice Chair; Talcott, Ranking Minority Member; Haigh, Hunter, McDermott, Priest, Santos, Shabro and Wallace.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Curtis and Tom.

Staff: Sarah Ream (786-7303).

Background:

School districts throughout the state use a combination of school security officers and school resource officers to address their security needs. School resource officers are fully commissioned law enforcement officers who spend all or a portion of their day at one or more school sites. School security officers typically are not commissioned law enforcement officers, although some may be retired from law enforcement.

Decisions regarding the qualifications for employment and the training standards and requirements of school security officers are made locally. The state has not established licensing, certification, or registration requirements for school security officers. To meet their

training needs, districts may partner with local law enforcement or may contract with private providers for security personnel training.

Policies regarding school discipline, including the use of force and restraint, are made at the local level and no requirement exists for districts to specify whether use of force or restraint is permitted. A variety of approaches exist statewide, ranging from hands-off policies, to those that permit the use of deadly force.

The School Safety Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee) established through the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) has begun to address the need for a more comprehensive set of training standards and requirements for school security personnel, as well as the need for guidance regarding use of force policies. The Advisory Committee's work includes efforts to define the training standards and requirements necessary to meet the full spectrum of school safety issues including prevention, intervention, crisis response, and recovery.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The Advisory Committee, working with the OSPI, is directed to convene a workgroup to evaluate and make recommendations regarding:

- (1) a model policy regarding the roles and duties of school security professionals and their supervisors;
- (2) the minimum skills, abilities, and training school security professionals should possess; and
- (3) development of a school security license and/or limited law enforcement commission.

The workgroup shall submit a report and recommendations to the Legislature by November 15, 2006.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill requires the Advisory Committee to convene the workgroup. The original bill directed the OSPI to do so. The substitute requires that the Commissions on Asian Pacific American Affairs, African-American Affairs, the state Commission on Hispanic Affairs, and the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs be included in the workgroup.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: (Original) There is currently no definition of who is qualified to be a school security professional, nor what they may and may not do in that position. Districts vary in what types of actions school security professionals may take and what their training and qualifications must be. Districts are trending away from hiring commissioned school resource officers and toward hiring school security professionals, for which there needs to be defined standards. This bill is a simple, modest, and straightforward request to have the existing workgroup make recommendations regarding school security professionals.

Schools need a model policy to reduce their risk of liability. The current system of not having standard operating procedures is a mistake waiting to happen. Without this bill and the workgroup's recommendations, districts will continue to grope for a solution. School safety is getting more complex, and standards are necessary to protect students and staff. As many people as possible are needed at the table in developing the model policy. If licensure for school security professionals is recommended, the costs, and who bears those costs, must be considered.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Dickerson, prime sponsor; Bill Wiester, Canfield and Associates; Mary Kenfield, Washington State Parent Teacher Association; Craig Apperson, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; Randy Town, Educational Service District 105 and Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission; John Hughes, Sunnyside School District; Joe Pope, Association of Washington School Principals; Lucinda Young, Washington Education Association; and Bob Fulmer, Washington Schools Risk Management Pool.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.